

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

July 22, 1999

A special meeting of the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission was held on Thursday, July 22, 1999 at 1:00 p.m. in the Planning Department Conference Room, 10th Floor, City Hall, 455 North Main, Wichita, Kansas. The meeting was to discuss the Comprehensive Plan.

The following members were present: Bill Johnson, Chair; Chris Carraher; John C. Frye; Frank Garofalo; Ron Marnell; John W. McKay, Jr.; Jerry Michaelis; George Platt; and Ray Warren.

Also present at the meeting were: Bill Gale, City Council; Joe Pisciotte, City Council; George Rogers, City Council; Bob Martz, City Council; Joan Cole, City Council, Chris Cherches, City Manager; Bob Knight, Mayor; Gary Rebenstorf; City Law Department Director; Bill Hancock, County Commission; Betsy Gwin, County Commission; Tom Winters, County Commission; Rich Euson, County Counsellor; Irene Hart, Sedgwick County Bureau of Community Development; Tim Witsman, Chamber of Commerce, and Marvin Krout, Planning Department.

Marvin Krout introduced the discussion by explaining why we plan:

- 1) To make better decisions that will affect the community's quality of life.
- 2) Required to prepare a 20 year transportation plan and update it every 5 years to receive federal transportation funds.
- 3) To reduce the number and intensity of conflicts among elected officials at public meetings.

Suggested three land use goals for the Plan:

- 1) Reverse decline in Central Wichita.
 - a) Encourage rehabilitation and renovation of existing buildings.
 - b) Encourage in-fill development.
 - c) Retain/attract middle-income households.
- 2) Encourage new development patterns at Wichita's edges that are compact and efficient.
 - a) Higher residential densities.
 - b) Fullest possible development of land with existing or easily expanded services.
- 3) Protect land from premature and inefficient development with large (5-10 acre) lots.
 - a) Large lot development at cities' edges that obstruct later urban expansion.
 - b) Large lot development beyond urban growth areas that consumes significant acreage, conflicts with farm operations, and presents potential service cost burdens.

The MAPC, City Council, and County Commission discussed their reactions to the three goals stated above. There was a consensus that goals one and two were laudatory, but goal three had more mixed reviews. Members spoke in support of "incentives" based strategies versus placing extensive new regulations on individuals and developers. It was also pointed out that Sedgwick County's population has grown faster than projected, and should be taken into consideration when considering any goals. It was also agreed upon that County-City cooperation is necessary.

Participants in the meeting were pleased that the city and county were working together. Mayor Knight commented that because of Wichita's size and influence, it has a responsibility to its neighbors, and the region should speak with one voice. Further comments made during the meeting are listed below.

Goal 1: Reverse decline in Central Wichita.

- C City Council member Cole noted that her district has some of the older houses in the City, and that many of the dwelling units are being vacated rapidly, along with businesses. She suggested the need for a balance between older parts of the city and new growth areas. She also mentioned that the downtown is not viable anymore. Ms. Cole stated there needs to be incentives offered to people who move or build in the central core of Wichita. The City has tried to do this, e.g. NRA plan, but needs to get beyond single lot development and must start assembling larger tracts of land for redevelopment.
- C City Council member Pisciotte stated that a city can be no better than the downtown area. Cities depend on their downtown for economic stability. The downtown is also what visitors notice. Mr. Pisciotte also said that hopefully there will not be the view that the downtown and fringe areas are opposed to each other. One does not have to develop at the expense of the other.

- C Mayor Knight mentioned the concept of growth needs to be enlarged. It is not just the development of new areas, but also includes redevelopment, infill, and revitalization.
- C County Commissioner Hancock noted it will not be difficult to meet these goals (especially goal 1) if incentives are offered to developers to develop in the inner city.
- C County Commissioner Gwin declared that much of the flight from the center is due to the negative perceptions of USD 259.
- C MAPC member Frye said that good things about the school system need to be promoted in order to change the negative perceptions which exist. In addition, the School Board and school administrators should be included in the City's plans and decisions. Mr. Frye also stated the City needs to take care of the parts of the city that already exist so that older areas do not deteriorate.
- C County Manager Buchanan stated that we need not only incentives for builders, but incentives need to be offered to people to make them want to live in the central part of the city. Studies show people prefer to live in the suburbs.
- C Chamber Director Witsman mentioned the City should try to assist in development. Letting the core deteriorate would not do anyone any good. Incentives do not need to be just in the form of money, they can be procedures and regulations. He feels the business community would support this.

Goal 2: Encourage new development patterns at Wichita's edges that are compact and efficient.

- C County Commissioner Winters stated the potential of flooding in new and existing areas need to be addressed. The Cowskin creek basin is still only 10% developed, and there are still opportunities to develop this area in a way which will have a lower impact on flooding. He also stated that smart growth should not mean slow growth or no growth. Another point made by Mr. Winters was that the small cities are expanding toward each other and the planning commission needs to look at the issues involved with their expansion. He said that he thinks development has been in tune with the marketplace even if it appears that local government is not committed to some of the goals in the 1993 Comprehensive Plan.
- C City Council member Pisciotte noted that cities which restrict the growth of suburbs are headed for trouble because new development and growth is needed for cities to increase their wealth. Mr. Pisciotte mentioned the need to eliminate the term sprawl from future discussions. He feels that it creates negative feelings.
- C County Commissioner Hancock mentioned that the federal government provides a lot of money for efficient growth. People in this area can be very creative in meeting the federal government's requirements. During the energy shortage, a lot of people responded to incentives offered by the federal government.
- C County Commissioner Gwin stated infrastructure at the edges of Wichita should be developed to City standards.
- C Mayor Knight stated that he supported the goal of efficiency, and there is something to be said for trying to develop with quality.
- C Chamber of Commerce Director Witsman stated that aesthetics are very important in trying to attract people to Wichita. However, not everyone in his organization agrees with this. Mr. Witsman also declared development within the central core should not be done at the expense of growth at the edges. Growth pays for itself and increases the wealth of the community as a whole.

Goal 3: Protect land from premature and inefficient development with large (5-10 acre) lots.

- C County Commissioner Gwin mentioned that agricultural zoning may have more support now than it had in the past, due to some conflicts between agricultural uses and newer subdivisions which are expanding into rural areas. Protecting land from premature development and regulating large lot development will face a lot of opposition. However, cluster development makes sense. Ms. Gwin said there is more support for agricultural zoning than in the past, but not everyone is for it.
- C City Council member Cole stated in addition to redeveloping the central core of Wichita, incentives can be used to encourage more efficient, compact growth along the fringe of the City to protect land from premature development.

Large lot development currently has incentives in the form of cheap land. County Commissioner Winters said that agricultural zoning will be a tough sell especially for those within 3-4 miles of the city, but beyond that there may be some support for it. However, the agriculture community needs to be the ones who bring it forward.

- C County Manager Buchanan declared that agricultural zoning should not be used. He stated that it is not the job of government to tell people what they can do with their private property.

State of Kansas)
Sedgwick County) ^{ss}

I, Marvin S. Krout, Secretary of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, do hereby certify that the foregoing copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, held on _____, is a true and correct copy of the minutes officially approved by such Commission.

Given under my hand and official seal this _____ day of _____, 1999.

Marvin S. Krout, Secretary
Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan
Area Planning Commission

(SEAL)